

Citation for published version:

von Oppen, K 2009, 'Reporting from Bosnia: reconceptualising the notion of a 'journalism of attachment'', *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 21-33.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14782800902844669>

DOI:

[10.1080/14782800902844669](https://doi.org/10.1080/14782800902844669)

Publication date:

2009

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](#)

'This is an electronic version of an article published in "von Oppen, K., 2009. Reporting from Bosnia: reconceptualising the notion of a 'journalism of attachment'. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 17 (1), pp. 21-33" . The *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* is available online at: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713429588~db=all>

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Reporting from Bosnia: Reconceptualising the Notion of a ‘Journalism of Attachment’

Distant countries are like stories. Once such a story has become established it is difficult to break out of, once it has been moulded into a useful truth by being told again and again (Wiedemann 2004).¹

The story of Bosnia remains vivid in the western European imagination. In the early 1990s dreams of peaceful transition, poignantly encapsulated by images of East Germans scaling the Berlin Wall, were rudely interrupted by the outbreak of war in Bosnia. From 1992 onwards pictures of dead civilians on the streets of Sarajevo, or of emaciated Bosnian Muslims held behind barbed wire, reminiscent of the Nazi concentration camps, confirmed that the ‘end of history’ appeared to be over. The two

images, of hope in Berlin and death in Bosnia, seemed to point to different possibilities for the new Europe; to either a new, peaceful era of civic democracy or to a return of national conflict and ethnic genocide. That the two images were in fact different manifestations of the same process was rarely mentioned. Today, Germans continue to celebrate the peaceful transition, while Bosnia remains defined by the brutality of its war. In spite of the relative calm in the region today, Bosnia remains a symbol of ethnic cleansing, often named in one breath, along with the brutal wars in Somalia and Rwanda. Over time the killing has become disassociated from anything to do with either the Cold War transition or Europe itself, whose role has become that of an external and benign force intervening to save the region from the unspeakable Serb, particularly after the NATO-led war against Serbia in 1999. Here, we can see the impact of a decade of representations which turned Bosnia into a foreign place, which became as alien to the western imagination as African countries remain today. In her analysis of international responses to the conflict, Susan L. Woodward argued that 'ignoring [...] interdependence in dealing with the Yugoslav crisis led to many paradoxes and had counterintuitive results' (1995, p. 3). I suggest that this can have its counterpart in representations which ignore interconnections and find only alterity and difference in Yugoslavia.

This article is concerned with the possibilities of challenging established stories of distant places. Beginning with the debate about a 'journalism of attachment' sparked by former BBC reporter Martin Bell (1997), it asks what possibilities exist specifically for reporters to engage with and reflect upon representation. It takes the example of the journalism of Marina Achenbach (1994), who reported regularly from Yugoslavia, and suggests that her work might offer a way of redefining a journalism of attachment.² In their study on war reporting and ethnic conflict, Tim Allen and Jean

Seaton have argued the need for ‘repoliticising war’ (1999, p. 4). Citing a study of war reporting from Rwanda and Zaire, they claim that reporting focused on shocking images of suffering but did not attempt to provide coherent political analysis of the conflict. According to Allen and Seaton conflicts presented as being concerned with ethnicity and difference have an immediate distancing effect on media audiences, for ethnicity is seen as something ‘that those strange and wild people have, not “us”’ (1999, p. 4). Moreover, they argue that the resurgence of primordialist explanations for war is ‘a way of cynically distancing events for political purposes’, which enables governments to shed responsibility and ignore the plight of refugees (1999, p. 2).³ My reading of Achenbach’s work suggests that she succeeds in repoliticising the Bosnian war, in the ways in which she reflects upon power and interaction in the journalistic encounter, which I would like to offer as an alternative model of ‘attached journalism’.

Reporting from Bosnia

Most media studies scholars agree that the end of the Cold War made foreign news more complex to convey to indifferent media audiences. Where previously obscure disputes were simply explained with reference to Cold War polarities, recent conflicts could not be so easily labelled. There is also agreement that the Cold War storyline was most frequently replaced by primordialist explanations, illustrated by an increased use of human interest stories. Asked what had changed since the Cold War, an informant in Ulf Hannerz’s study of foreign correspondents replied ““you have to write more seductively”” (2004, p. 31). One might cynically argue that the entire notion of a journalism of attachment, which will be defined below, is a response to this journalistic dilemma. At the same time, it is clear that Bosnia was a very different

kind of war to the first post-Cold War conflict in Iraq in 1991. It was fought at a relatively low impact level with occasional, well-publicised atrocities which overshadowed the gruelling daily persecution, expulsion and killings of primarily Bosnian Muslims but also Croats and Serbs at different stages of the war. It was a war that was prolonged over four years with shifting alliances and battlegrounds. Bosnia was close to most European capital cities, and reporters often simply hired vehicles to cross into the region. Controls were slight with few permit requirements, which meant that competition for sensational stories was intense. All this undoubtedly contributed to the difficulties reporters were faced with when conveying this complex war to their audiences. The personal and daily hardships faced by citizens in the besieged cities did not always make for a dramatic scoop. This was not a war that involved conventional military battles and dramatic destruction on a daily basis, and images of burnt-out houses would not hold audiences for long. Without clearly-defined battlefields, reporters had more freedom to define their own focal points and storylines, which undoubtedly increased the confusion of media audiences at home. The situation was aggravated by the campaign of misinformation conducted by all three sides in the conflict.

This clearly does not explain how the region and its conflict ended up in Africa, compared with Rwanda, Somalia and Zaire. In recent years scholars have begun to look at the ways in which the Balkans, to which Bosnia belongs, have been represented more generally. The most influential study in this field is *Imagining the Balkans* by Maria Todorova (1997) in which she uncovers a racist discourse on the region, which she labels 'balkanism'. This, she argues, results from the peculiar liminality of the region as neither clearly western European nor oriental. As such it is broadly defined as European, but as Europe's Other, and is generally associated with

brutish, primitive poverty. It is significant that this discourse is also a self-designatory one, in that the different Yugoslav nationalities used it to distinguish themselves from their neighbours. Thus, it undoubtedly played a key part in the reporting of the war both inside and outside the country. Balkanist scholars have argued that one of the reasons for the persistence of this racist discourse is the dominance of journalism in shaping images of the region. This in itself assumes that journalism cannot challenge dominant stories about places, because the medium is characterised by shorter, simplistic narratives often written quickly, and subject to the scrutiny of editorial offices. Charlotte Wiedemann (2004), cited in the introduction, claims that editors respond to a new narrative like children whose favourite fairytale has been altered. This analysis argues that reporters can challenge storylines, but that the way mapped out by Martin Bell, outlined below, is problematic, and may have contributed to the exclusion of Bosnia from the western European imagination.

‘Journalism of Attachment’

After the war in Bosnia, many reporters expressed their unease at the way the conflict had been reported. For example, *Süddeutsche* reporter Peter Sartorius noted that his profession had been tested to its limits in Bosnia: ‘Again and again I realise that a reporter who does not limit himself to describing the sound of mortar attacks reaches the limits of his profession’ (Anon., 1999, 16).⁴ The comment suggests a degree of reflexivity about the limits of journalistic truth, but Sartorius was probably not challenging its fundamental premises. Concerned with the misinformation of Bosnian news agencies, he was here specifically writing about the degree to which reporters were forced to rely on unconfirmed sources. In other words, Sartorius was in fact reaffirming the truthseeking claims of his profession, rather than challenging its

ability to produce representations in the first place. British reporter Martin Bell's response was quite different. In a controversial intervention after the war Bell (1997) claimed that Bosnia represented a turning point in his career, for he had realised that that he was driven by his sense of responsibility borne out a growing awareness that reporters can influence wars. Setting out an agenda for the future, he calls for the end of 'bystanders' journalism' in favour of a 'journalism of attachment'. Bystanders journalism, according to Bell, is one which focuses on military strategies and weaponry rather than people. As a result, many critics have defined attached journalism as being characterised by human interest stories, which is incorrect. In any case, Bell probably intended this argument to resonate amongst left/liberal critics who had criticised the reporting of Gulf War in 1991 for precisely this obsession with weaponry and military strategy.

What makes Bell's position particularly challenging for reporters is that he rejects the notion of journalistic objectivity. This is fairly revolutionary stuff for a profession that regards objectivity as its guiding principle. Mark Pedelty, writing on US journalists for example, describes objectivity as a professional obsession: 'Journalists turn fact into fetish. They believe facts speak for themselves; that facts are found, not created, and that they are communicable without placement in ordered and 'valued' systems of meanings. Discovered and verified, facts magically transform the correspondents' prose into objective text' (1995, p. 171).

Rejecting objectivity is to challenge what Howard Tumber and Marina Prentoulis have described as a 'strategic ritual' of journalism by which it sets its professional standards and authorises reporters' texts (2003, p. 216). Bell's disagreement with objectivity is however familiar to many disciplines concerned with representation. Effectively advocating a reflexive positionality he rejects objectivity because

reporters use their 'eyes and ears and mind and accumulated experience' (1997, p. 10). Moreover, he emphasises the performative aspect of reporting in a foreign environment, describing it as 'a human and dynamic interaction.' (1997, p. 10) Having thus questioned his authority to write the 'truth' about this foreign war, Bell draws a surprising conclusion from this instability. Declaring journalism to be a 'moral enterprise', he appears to don the mantle of the moral witness. I cite at length from his definition of attached journalism:

In place of the dispassionate practices of the past I now believe in what I call the journalism of attachment. By this I mean a journalism that cares as well as knows; that is aware of its responsibilities; and will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor. This is not to back one side or faction or people against another; it is to make the point that we in the press [...] do not stand apart from the world. We are a part of it. (Bell, 1997, p. 8)

For a reporter like Bell to reduce the conflict in Bosnia to a moral battle in which he will take sides, is problematic for many reasons. In terms of the public sphere, to which Bell belongs, these moral categories effectively silence debate. As Barbie Zelizer argues, 'bearing witness calls for truth telling at the same time as it sanctions an interpretation of what is being witnessed' (1998, p. 10). By assuming the role of moral witness, Bell claims a truthseeking role at the same time as he seems to question it. He undermines his own professional authority by challenging journalistic objectivity only to replace it with moral certainties. According to Avishai Margalit in her analysis of *The Ethics of Memory* (2002), a moral witness must fulfil two criteria; firstly, he or she must witness evil, and secondly, they must experience or risk experiencing suffering. Bell does not mention his own injury in Bosnia but does

position himself as physically involved in the conflict. This is more than mere presence, and he adopts the metaphor of the battlefield to describe himself as one of the 'foot soldiers in the trenches of news' (1997, p. 9). And again: 'We and they [soldiers] are battle-softened veterans of a foreign war' (1997, p. 15). Secondly, Bell evokes the Holocaust: 'And in a world where genocide has returned in recent years to haunt three continents we should remind ourselves that this crime against humanity requires accomplices' (1997, p. 15). The concept of the moral witness here appears to hinge on this subtle evocation of the Holocaust, even if Bell does not make a direct link. In this way, Bell's notion of attachment places him as a moral witness in a battle between good and evil, and authorises his writings on Bosnia.

Bell's solution to the problems of depicting complex wars in a post-Cold War context is to reduce it to a moral problem. In other words, his notion of responsibility does not relate to his construction of a 'responsible narrative', to quote a concept elaborated by Leslie A. Adelson (1994, p. 321), but in taking responsibility for differentiating between good and evil. By introducing the terms 'good' and 'evil', he effectively depoliticises the conflict, in the same way that primordialist interpretations do. This is not to question Bell's own motives, for this is a conflict that clearly moves him. Yet, there is something problematic in the witness role that Bell assumes. To witness is both to see and to remember. While one might be generous and argue that he interrogates the act of seeing, by noting that reporters are influenced by their own preconceptions, the act of remembering, which in Bell's case is the process of representation, becomes unproblematic. Not only is he able to distinguish between good and evil, he also overlooks what John Durham Peters has described as 'the fragility of witnessing', namely the precarious 'journey from experience (the seen) into words (the said)' (2001, p. 710). He does so because he confuses his role as

secondary witness – as professional reporter and non-participant – with that of the primary witness. In an essay on memory and Yugoslavia Petar Ramadanović, using the case of a US correspondent in Bosnia, agrees that reporters crossed the line to define themselves as primary witnesses (2002, p. 355). This meant that they overlooked the fact that their task was to represent the conflict, conscious always of their different status in it.

The notion of a journalism of attachment has been criticised by scholars and reporters alike. BBC correspondent David Loyn interprets it as a result of the frustration of reporters at being ignored, leading some to demand the right to take a position condemning the Serbs. He calls it ‘an elitist demand, giving a special licence to the few’ (2003, p. 3). Thomas Hanitzsch argues that it overlooks the demands of the audience, which may not be interested in this type of commitment (2004, p. 89).

Stephen J. Ward defends the notion of journalistic objectivity, arguing that it does not necessarily imply the absence of feeling or passion (1998, p. 122). Wilhelm Kempf blames attached journalists for their lack of interest in negotiated peace solutions and a widespread support for military intervention (2002, p. 228). Journalist Mick Hume argues similarly, pointing out that ‘[o]nce [...] the wars are reduced to the acts of evil East Europeans [...], then it becomes easy to turn the West into the potential saviour of the “uncivilised” world’ (1997, p. 15). Hume is one of the harshest critics of attached journalism, arguing that it puts the reporter centre stage. My concern is a different one, for I argue that the problem with attached reporters is that they in fact sideline their own role in the conflict. As Ramadanović notes, it was ironic that reporters who called for intervention by the West in Bosnia failed to see how they had already brought the West into the conflict themselves: ‘This “West” is not only its governments and NATO; this West is also the liberal, self-conscious but not self-

reflexive, subject [...] who pretends to know what he sees, and who pretends to be able to use power (of order, for example) without himself being affected by it' (2002, p. 356). Bell thus ignores what Meyda Yeğenoğlu describes as the 'westernising process' inherent to discourses of the other (1998, pp. 89-90). In her study of Orientalism, she argues that the key point is not the dissemination of negative images, but the 'power to construct the very object it speaks about and from its power to produce a regime of truth about the other and thereby establish the identity and the power of the subject that speaks about it.' (1998, pp. 89-90). This is the point at which the primordialist and the moral construction overlap, for neither allow the western speaking subject, nor indeed the audience for whom the construction is produced, to recognise the other in themselves. I argue that paradoxically the journalism of attachment made us all [western] bystanders to an alien war which meant that we could absolve all responsibility for its origins or representation.⁵

Auf dem Weg nach Sarajevo

Reflexivity in journalism has been widely debated in scholarly circles. The most common suggestion is that reporters make transparent the conditions of their own reporting. Clearly, this has the potential to destabilize the authority of the reporter, whose perspective and knowledge would be revealed to be contingent. Similarly, reporters can offer a critical view on their own sources, which occurred in German coverage of the latest Iraq war, when television stations highlighted the fact that they had insufficient access to information (Hanitzsch, 2004, p. 492). At the time, this clearly suited the interests of German audiences who supported their own government's opposition to the war. Arguably, this type of reflexivity is easier when it reinforces an existing societal consensus on a foreign conflict. In the brief analysis

below, I look at a reporter whose reflexivity *challenges* the dominant consensus in Germany on Bosnia. This was not about voicing sympathy for the opposing side, the much-maligned Serbs for instance, nor about questioning stories already disseminated. Achenbach's writing offers an example of a reflexive positionality which attempts to transcend the binarism between western European [moral] witness and Balkan killer. I would like to show how Achenbach's writings can be read as an alternative form of attached journalism, which recognises its own implicatedness, or attachment, is aware of its own positionality, but which does not abandon the quest to represent the conflict.

There is an inherent problem in taking journalism, rather than literature, as the site for a reflexive resistance to dominant narratives of place. In his analysis *The Rhetoric of Empire* David Spurr has examined the use of colonial tropes in literary reporting, and the possibilities of resistance. Citing the work of Christopher Miller (1990), he rightly points out that radical self-reflexivity is impossible in journalism as this would be to abandon the attempt to negotiate between cultures by focusing on the self, and thus would no longer fulfil its purpose. Resistance in journalism must take a different form, and Spurr tries to find the places 'where journalists call into question, however briefly, the underlying assumptions that govern their work' (1993, p. 189). He argues that such resistance is only possible 'in the immediate context of the moment', or as 'an event' (1993, p. 189). I take this to mean that reporters cannot reflect in an abstract manner about their own subject-positions, but can evoke the dynamics of the encounter in the moment itself.

Mary Louise Pratt's notion of the 'contact zone' offers a useful way of reconceptualising the encounter between reporter and 'reportee' (1993, p. 7).⁶ By focusing attention on 'the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously

separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect', Pratt's work reminds us that foreign reporters are also professional travellers (1993, p. 7). Like Bell, Pratt tries to highlight the performative aspect of the encounter by using the term contact. Yet, where Bell implies that this authorises his interpretation, Pratt highlights the instability that results both from the unequal relations of power and from the impact that the contact has on both sides: 'A "contact" perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among [...] travelers and "travelees", not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power' (1993, p. 7).

A 'contact perspective' responds to Bell's challenge to recognise the implicatedness of journalism in the conflict. It reconceptualises the journalistic encounter as a relationship which recognises power differentials, but also as a site of mutual exchange. The following section looks briefly at a few examples from Achenbach's work which illustrate how a reconceptualised journalism of attachment might function by adopting such a 'contact perspective'.

Itineraries are never innocent, but already contain within them an interpretation of the given situation. More than any other German reporter or writer, Marina Achenbach actually travelled *around* Yugoslavia, particularly through the peripheries and border zones. Most reporters were based in Sarajevo, travelling out to hot spots when necessary. The siege of the city was an horrific event, but focusing on it as symbolic of the war meant offering a specific interpretation of the causes of the war.⁷ Already the title of Achenbach's collected writings *Auf dem Weg nach Sarajevo* confusingly seems to imply that she never in fact reaches the city.⁸ Her journey takes her to

Tuscany, Slovenia, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia, although she does in fact spend the majority of her time in the Bosnian capital. At the same time, her itinerary suggests that the only way to understand the Bosnian war is to undertake both a journey into the past, which she does by seeking out the roots of the conflict, and into the different parts of Yugoslavia, underlining that this is not a specifically Bosnian problem. More importantly, she challenges the western European focus on Sarajevo by emphasising the journey to the city, whereas most reporters underlined the significance of the stay itself. Achenbach's intention is to point to another symbolic journey, namely the way in which Yugoslavia gradually imploded to become a metaphorical Sarajevo.

A few examples from her itinerary will suffice to show how she challenges conventional approaches by assuming a 'contact perspective'. Like all travellers to Yugoslavia, Achenbach is concerned with border crossings. As the implosion of the region resulted in the emergence of many different new states and areas often defined by ethnicity, most travellers sought out vantage points where two cultures met or clashed, and Bosnia was popularly defined as the meeting place of cultures or civilisations. Unintentionally perhaps, such accounts reinforced the idea of the existence of discrete identities which could be separated into different states. Only in Sarajevo did travellers and reporters find lived multiethnicity, with which they rapidly identified. Achenbach is less concerned with mapping out ethnic difference than in finding out how it works as an exclusionary mechanism. She does this in two ways. Firstly, despite her own Yugoslav background, Achenbach defines herself as an outsider throughout. Her ability to speak the language whilst remaining a foreigner becomes a way for her to identify with those in a similar position, ie with those who were suddenly excluded.⁹ These are the people who no longer fit into places that have

become redetermined by new borders or nationalities, or who refuse to abandon their hybrid identities in favour of the new clearly delineated national ones.

Secondly, Achenbach's itinerary is often concerned with remembering the forgotten.

Auf dem Weg nach Sarajevo tries to remind its readers that these newly emerging entities and identities are a recent development. As Ramandanović (2002) has written in relation to Dubravka Ugresić's writing, Achenbach's text is concerned with not forgetting the forgetting. Ramandanović argues that it was necessary to forget the ways in which Yugoslav society forgot its ties and common memories in order to make the killing possible. Thus, forgetting the forgetting means that Yugoslavs had to learn to forget the slow passage from coexistence to exclusion, which is always a case of small steps. Achenbach refuses to let this happen and describes seemingly insignificant events: how parents tear the pages out of children's books to prevent the alphabet giving away their ethnic group; how a wedding party is gently persuaded to sing only Slovenian songs even though it is an ethnically mixed partnership (1994: 14-190). These small steps from coexistence and tolerance to exclusion need to be forgotten in order for the killing to be possible, Ramadanovic appears to suggest. This is the memory work that Achenbach is concerned with, which shows how identities are constructed and often imposed, rather than related to primordial loyalties. Yet, she does not allow this to become defined as a development peculiar to Yugoslavia.

Achenbach's contact zone is not limited to Yugoslavia, for she also follows migrants to Germany. In Berlin she meets a young Serb who is critical of the war. The viewpoint of the political opposition to Milosevic rarely featured in the German media, but this is not the crucial aspect of the report. Her report ends with the young man describing his refusal to define himself by his nationality in his school in Berlin: "Even the Turks ask, and I say: I am nothing. That annoys them: what do you mean

nothing? They all want me to be something''' (1994:, p. 56).¹⁰ Here, Achenbach adds a new dimension to the question of identities and their imposition. Not only does she suggest that this labelling, particularly by ethnicity, is equally present outside Yugoslavia, but she brings in Germany's troubled relationship with its own ethnic minorities.

Achenbach does not shy away from describing the horrific crimes perpetuated against civilians in Bosnia. Yet she never allows the reader to entirely distance herself from events. For example, she tells the story of a Bosnian Muslim family forced to flee from their home by Serb militias led by the infamous Arkan, who take over the village and imprison the men for several months. She describes the sudden way in which these people were forced to choose identities: 'Sometimes you can tell by the name, but not always. In their previous lives these categories had never played a role, now it was becoming all the more significant: Who am I, where do I belong? Who is free, to whom should I be loyal, whom do I fear?' (1994, p. 102).¹¹ Yet again, Achenbach prevents the reader from assuming the position of benevolent onlooker in this situation, confident in her ability to distinguish between good Bosnian Muslims and bad Bosnian Serbs. Not only is the story framed by the frightening account of their illegal migration to Germany, but it also depicts kind Serbs, including an illegal people smuggler, who help the family. Even here Achenbach does not slip into simply reversing the construction by showing Germany only in an unfavourable light. On the final lap of their journey into Germany a taxi driver picks them up and does not report them, knowing they are illegal. Here too, their complex itinerary reflects the complexity of her own perspective and interpretation of the situation.

Achenbach also recounts the experience of queuing with a Yugoslav migrant in Berlin (1994, pp. 106-108). Here, she does not attempt to describe the fear that must lie at

the heart of these attempts to acquire a residency permit for Germany, for she clearly has no need for this document. Instead, she describes the depersonalisation that takes place when people are forced to queue without knowing whether they will be acknowledged at any stage. She attempts to understand the mechanisms by which queuing inspires both hatred of the other and of the self. Here again, the contact zone is extended into Germany, and forces the reader to recognise the multitude of journeys taking place through and out of Bosnia. This perspective upsets the conventional perspective of the traveller encountering the 'travellee' in an unfamiliar place. Achenbach turns the familiar streets of Berlin, or indeed a border crossing into Germany into a part of the Bosnian war, and forces the reader to recognise the Other in themselves.

Concluding Remarks

At the end of her first trip to Sarajevo in October 1993, Achenbach tries to draw some conclusions about her experiences. She asks herself what she has gained from travelling there, particularly in the light of the already extensive media coverage:

We know a lot more details than about other places which are also at war.

Without interruption the media send pictures of this war out into the world, even in the Philippines people are fired up to fight and die for Bosnia. In every country Bosnia has become a battle cry for a different battle. We, the observers, are being lied to and manipulated by every rule in the book, and we know it. (1994, p. 93)¹²

She claims that these stories function to desensitize the audience until they accept that the only solution is military intervention. One might argue here that Achenbach is a little disingenuous in omitting the fact that she is not only a consumer of stories but

also a producer of them. Yet, her reflections are useful in upsetting the distinction made between the witness, like Bell, who bases his authority on immediate presence, and the consumer of the media, who acquires supposedly secondary information. The distinction is a false one, suggesting that reporters are not influenced by other media representations, but base their stories on their immediate experiences. Achenbach here rightly reminds her readers that reporters are not primary witnesses, as Bell might claim, but secondary witnesses who are in the end also part of the audience. She succeeds here in highlighting the ambivalence of her own authority, and in doing so reminds her readers that all knowledge is contingent.

I suggest that Achenbach succeeds in rewriting the well-known story of the Bosnian War so that it loses some of its usefulness, to paraphrase Wiedemann. She travels in and out of Bosnia and around Yugoslavia, as well as tracing the journeys of migrants. In effect, her itinerary implies that you cannot understand the war without looking also at the plight of migrants in Berlin forced to adopt a particular identity, or at the many people who are subverting the new borders by maintaining contact with those who have been excluded. Writing for a German audience, she reminds them that mechanisms of labelling begin in the schoolyards of Germany, where Turkish children demand the same clearly delineated identities as are presumably demanded of them. She does not reflect on her own act of representation, but she does show how reporters make choices which impact on the stories they tell, and that they are not only witnesses of war but also consumers of media stories which shape them in the same ways. Achenbach travels alongside Yugoslavs on illegal bus routes, queues with migrants in Berlin and ducks the bullets of snipers in Sarajevo. Yet, she never forgets that she is an outsider in these situations. To paraphrase Leslie Adelson writing about the author Sten Nadolny, I suggest that she successfully shifts ‘the focus from a

German “us” and a [...] [Bosnian] “them” to the multivalent production of complex cultural positionalities’, and thus ‘bespeaks the need to explore more productive ways of ‘knowing’ the relationship between the two’ (1995, p. 231). I propose that this should be the starting point for a reengagement with a ‘journalism of attachment’, which would reflect on the multiple ways in which reporters can conceptualise the relations between themselves and the ‘contact zone’ to which they travel.

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¹ "Ferne Länder sind wie Erzählungen. Es ist schwer, aus einer solchen Erzählung auszubrechen, wenn sie sich erst einmal festgesetzt hat, wenn sie durch vielfaches Wiederholen rund geschliffen worden ist zu einem handlichen Stück Gebrauchs-Wahrheit" (Wiedemann 2004). All translations are my own.

² Marina Achenbach's journalistic writings were subsequently collated in one volume entitled *Auf dem Weg nach Sarajevo* (1994). The texts originally appeared mainly in the German weekly newspaper *Freitag*.

³ Their work is part of the Forum Against Ethnic Violence, founded in 1993.

⁴ "Immer wieder wird mir bewußt, daß ein Kriegsreporter, der sich nicht auf die Beschreibung von Kanonendonner beschränkt, an die Grenzen seiner Profession stößt." (Anon. 1999: 16)

⁵ Philip Hammond goes so far as to argue that the frameworks which reporters used in Bosnia made the NATO-led war against Serbia possible (2000, p. 34).

⁶ I have adapted the term "travelee" used by Mary Louise Pratt (1993, p. 7) in her work.

⁷ Sarajevo represented a multiethnic city which was under siege by Bosnian Serbs. As reporters focused on the city, the conflict became defined as an attack on multiculturalism.

⁸ Compare it for example to the title of taz reporter Erich Rathfelder's collected writing *Sarajevo und danach*.

⁹ She was born in Zagreb but grew up in the German Democratic Republic.

¹⁰ “Auch die Türken fragen es immer, ich sage: Ich bin nichts. Das ärgert sie: wie – nichts? All wollen, daß ich etwas bin.” (p. 56)

¹¹ “Manchmal ist an den Namen die Herkunft erkennbar, aber nicht immer. Die Zuordnung war in ihrem bisherigen Leben ohne Bedeutung, nun bekommt sie eine umso größere: Wer bin ich, wohin gehöre ich? Wer ist vogelfrei, wem bin ich loyal, wen fürchte ich?” (p. 102)

¹² “Wir kennen hier viel mehr Einzelheiten als in anderen Gegenden, wo auch Krieg ist [...] Pausenlos liefern die Medien Bilder dieses Krieges in die Welt, bis in die Philippinen sind Menschen dafür entzündet, für Bosnien zu kämpfen und zu sterben. Bosnien ist ein Schlachtruf geworden, in jedem Land für eine eigene Schlacht. Wir Zuschauer werden nach allen Regeln der Kunst belogen und manipuliert und wissen es” (p. 93).

Page number for Wiedemann?

2 translation needed early on in main text of Achenbach title

Italics needed for taz? also clarification – newspaper

10 – all or alle wollen?